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**NATIONAL DEFENSE PANEL CALLS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY  
TRANSFORMATION**

The National Defense Panel delivered its report today on the challenges and opportunities of US defense in the next century. The report, *Transforming Defense – National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, anticipates very different threats to the US by the year 2020. “Our interests will be challenged in new ways,” said the Panel Chairman, Philip Odeen; “We may have to cope with new or changing regional threats. Some of these new challenges may differ markedly from those we plan for today. For example, we are likely to have to cope with penetrations of our information systems. Rogue states and terrorists, perhaps armed with weapons of mass destruction, may attempt different kinds of attacks, not only on our forces abroad, but in our homeland, in urban areas and perhaps space.” The report points out that the nation’s military, which has done such a superb job of protecting US interests in the past, may not be able to solve these future problems without significant change.

The Panel calls for a comprehensive reshaping of the skills and capabilities of our armed forces, and urges that the process begin immediately. “This transformation must be undertaken as a part of an overall reassessment and redesign of our national security structure,” cautioned Odeen. “The challenges we face do not follow traditional bureaucratic or geographical boundaries. They go beyond today’s national security structures and require the interaction of local and national domestic agencies, non-governmental organizations, traditional allies, and new international partners,” he said.

The report makes several recommendations as to how this transformation can be brought about: First, the US should focus its energies and resources on the challenges of tomorrow – even if that means accepting more risk in the near term. For example, we have structured and sized our forces to deal with two major theater wars: this may meet today’s security requirements, but it inhibits our ability to adapt and respond to challenges in the longer term.

Second, we must experiment -- investigate new joint operational concepts, apply advanced technologies in new ways, and explore different organizational structures. We must stimulate innovative thinking to develop the synergies inherent in the Services and other national assets. Information technology deserves particular emphasis.

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Third, we must divest ourselves of the systems, processes, and policies that have outlived their usefulness. Moreover, their cost diverts badly needed funds from investment in the future. The procurement process and infrastructure, which grew up over the last fifty years, served us well when we were facing a global Soviet threat. But they require thorough overhaul and reduction to be useful now that the Cold War is history.

Fourth, change and uncertainty will be the hallmark of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. We must redirect our planning and long-term thinking accordingly. No one knows with any precision what lies ahead. Therefore, we must proceed in a way that enables us to alter our response as threats and challenges develop and we better understand the potential of new technologies. By accepting that we cannot know the challenges and opportunities of the future, we will be more agile in responding to them.

Fifth and most importantly, the US must restructure its entire national security system, much as it did after World War II. Improved coherence and flexibility in response to threats at home and abroad demand the incorporation of economic, political, diplomatic, and military elements in an integrated system of mutual reinforcement and support. We will need this additional dimension of security if we are to succeed in addressing the vulnerabilities of the next century.

Congress mandated the Panel in December 1996 to assess the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review and address the future defense and security needs of the US. It began work in February and completed its report November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997. In addition to Chairman Odeen, the Panel is composed of Ambassador Richard L. Armitage; General Richard L. Hearney, US Marine Corps, Retired; Admiral David E. Jeremiah, US Navy, Retired; Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt; Dr. Andrew F. Krepinevich; General James P. McCarthy, US Air Force, Retired; Dr. Janne E. Nolan; and General Robert W. Riskassi, US Army, Retired.

Further information about the Panel, its members, and its report can be found on the Internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/ndp>.

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